

Members

Rep. Ben GiaQuinta, Chairperson
Rep. Claire Leuck
Rep. Robert Alderman
Rep. James Atterholt
Sen. Thomas Wyss
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. William Alexa
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Terry Smith
John Dahman
Jim Brown
David Miller



COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 232-9588 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Ed Gohmann, Attorney for the Commission
Bob Sigalow, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

Authority: IC 2-5-20

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 20, 2000
Meeting Time: 10:30 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Rep. Ben GiaQuinta, Chairperson; Rep. Claire Leuck; Rep. James Atterholt; Sen. Thomas Wyss; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Mr. John Dahman; Mr. David Miller.

Members Absent: Rep. Robert Alderman; Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. William Alexa; Mr. Terry Smith; Mr. Jim Brown.

Representative Ben GiaQuinta, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order shortly after 10:30 a.m.

I. Admission to the Indiana Veterans Home

Representative GiaQuinta began by noting that under current law, a person must be a resident of Indiana for five years before he or she can be admitted to the veterans home,

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

but that there is a waiver process available for persons who have at least one year of residency in Indiana. He stated that at its first two meetings the Commission had discussed the issue of whether the five-year residency requirement in statute should be changed to some other length of time.

Representative GiaQuinta then recognized Mr. Pete Maniago, the Indiana State Department of Health Assistant Commissioner for Operational Services. Mr. Maniago stated that each year the Department receives an average of six requests for a waiver from the residency requirements for admission to the Indiana Veterans Home. He testified that during the past three years the Department received 18 requests for waivers, and it had granted 15 of those requests. He noted that two of the three denials resulted from the inability of the Home to meet the medical needs of the applicants, and that the other denial involved an applicant who had no period of Indiana residency and was otherwise eligible for admission to the Michigan home for veterans.

Mr. Maniago stated that the Indiana Veterans Home is licensed for 455 persons and currently has 363 residents, and that the Home has sufficient staff and facilities for up to 385 persons. He said that based on the aging of the veterans who served during World War II, it was estimated that the Home would face an increased demand beginning in two or three years, with the peak demand occurring some time around 2010.

Mr. Maniago stated that there are 96 veterans homes in 46 states. He testified that 82 of those 96 homes responded to a survey, showing that 67 homes have a residency requirement of one year or less, nine homes have a residency requirement of two to three years, four homes have a residency requirement of three to four years, and two homes have a residency requirement of five or more years.

Mr. Maniago stated that because of the fixed costs incurred in operating the Indiana Veterans Home, it is not optimizing staff costs, and he said that increasing the number of residents to 385 would lower the cost per resident. He noted that such an increase would also maximize the Home's reimbursement from the United States Veterans Administration.

In response to a question he had been asked at the Commission's previous meeting, Mr. Maniago then described a number of issues that could potentially develop if the residency requirement were changed to one year. He stated that: (1) if demand increased rapidly a waiting list might develop; (2) if the number of residents increased above 385, costs would increase; and (3) the Home's problems with a shortage of trained staff and staff retention might be exacerbated.

Representative GiaQuinta then described PD 3287, which would provide that a person must be legal resident of Indiana for at least three years (rather than five years, under the current law) immediately preceding application in order to be eligible for admission to the Indiana Veterans' Home. Representative GiaQuinta stated that changing the residency requirement from five years to three years might help reduce the need for the waiver, and he said that he preferred to take an incremental approach to changing the residency requirement. After Commission discussion, PD 3287 was adopted by a vote of 7-0. (See Exhibit A.)

Senator Tom Wyss then thanked Mr. Maniago for his timely response to questions from the Commission.

2. POW \ MIA Flags

Representative GiaQuinta stated that Commission member John Dahman had previously suggested the idea of flying the POW \ MIA flag at Indiana's highway rest-stops. Representative GiaQuinta noted that some members of the Commission did not want to fly the POW \ MIA flag at the rest-stops all of the time, because those members like the symbolic power of flying the POW \ MIA flag only for the number of days equal to the number of Indiana soldiers missing in action. He then called on Mr. Bob Sigalow, fiscal analyst for the Commission, for a brief discussion of the costs of flying the POW \ MIA flag at rest-stops. Mr. Sigalow began by explaining that there are 38 state rest-stops, and that each rest-stop is currently equipped with a flag pole. He stated that the cost of a 3' x 5' POW \ MIA flag is approximately \$35, and that it is estimated that the flags would have to be replaced every six months because of wear and tear. Mr. Sigalow said that the cost of flying the flags year-round would be approximately \$2,660, but that if the flags were only flown for the same 61 day period that they are flown at the State House, the \$2,660 cost would only be incurred every 5 years. (See Exhibit B.)

Representative GiaQuinta then suggested that the Commission should consider adopting a resolution urging the Indiana Department of Transportation to fly the POW \ MIA flag at the same time it is being flown at the State House. He said that this would give additional recognition to the sacrifices made by prisoners and those who are missing, without diluting the symbolism of flying the flag one day for each of Indiana's MIA's. (See Exhibit C.)

Representative Clair Leuck and Senator Wyss commented that if the flag were flown at rest-stops one day for each of Indiana's MIA's, rather than year-round, it might bring people to think more deeply about those persons when the flag reappears each year.

Mr. Dahman thanked the other Commission members for considering the issue. Senator Allie Craycraft and Representative Leuck suggested that perhaps the rest-stops could also include a small display explaining the significance of the POW \ MIA flag.

Representative GiaQuinta suggested that the proposed resolution should include language urging the POW \ MIA flag to be flown on Memorial Day. Senator Wyss suggested that the resolution should specify that the flags would be flown at rest-stops and the State House on Memorial Day and (as is current practice) on one day for each of Indiana's Vietnam MIA's, and that the State should supply the flags.

The resolution, as amended by the Commission, was adopted by a 7-0 vote.

3. Final Report

Representative GiaQuinta then explained that the Commission's staff had prepared a proposed final report describing the issues that the Commission had reviewed during its meetings and summarizing the testimony that had been provided. Representative GiaQuinta noted that the report also included the recommendations that were made by the Commission. Commission member David Miller pointed out that the report contained a reference to "enlisted men," and he suggested that this should be changed to "enlisted personnel." The proposed final report, as altered by Mr. Miller's proposed change, was adopted by a 7-0 vote.

Representative GiaQuinta then thanked the Commission members for the work and the public for their comments during the interim. He then adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:30 a.m.